1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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The "earthiness" and the ribaldry of the country people is not an antithesis to their strict moral code. Rather it reinforces it. It gives its pietistic and too-respectable, churchly and town-bourgeois aspects an authentic, indigenous touch. Even more important, it makes for a modification of the conventional attitudes which fit them for the country people's social life.

In this ambivalence of attitude one can see the identifications between status in human relations and norms about sexual behavior more clearly. The one view, that "holiness" denies sex, can be reserved to suit the non-procreant statuses of family life. The other, the hearty and open view embodying animal analogy, frank interest, overt desire, can be reserved for the persons whose roles in social life allow free rein to the amatory and procreative urges.

For the small farmers marriages are for the purpose of producing children and assuring continuity of descent and ownership. They are "forever." They are indissoluble. Sexual relations are part of marriage, its pleasure and its duty. They lead to children if one is fortunate and strong and potent. It is the will of God. One may regret that one's childbearing came so early. There might have been more time for free enjoyment. But it is a regret to which one resigns oneself easily.

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weakening his horror of murder or his distaste for adulterous behavior, however familiar his tabloid-viewing may make them. Similarly the Englishman reading his detective stories and the Frenchman listening to his *chanteuses* are merely indulging vicarious "thrills." All of them are going through a playful rehearsal of the conditioned reflexes of social sanction, indignation, rage, and punitive action in the same way a dog growls and bares his fangs at his play fighting. The idea may seem a bit ludicrous in itself, and it will offend the moralists. But let them remember that in most persons moral and ethical activity is absolutely unreasoned, spontaneous, and without any kind of intellectual support at all. It is pure reflex. Like any other reflex, it must be kept alive by a constant restimulation. Only overzealous priests, reformers, teachers, "nice people," and prudes miss this point. They fail to understand that vulgarity often hides far stricter morality than hypocritic cant. This laughter represents a constant and not unpleasurable reiteration of the accepted canons of morality upon so important a matter.

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581 833 842 Thus marital and sexual success have but one criterion. One proves one's worth sexually in the marriage bed, which is in turn the childbirth bed. The proof of happy adjustment, of masculine virility, and of feminine worth is "the good long family." "Lots of women have no children," you are told, "but the men have no value in them if they don't." Both man and woman are at fault and in misfortune in childlessness. In one case of repeated miscarriages, the man might be at fault, it was said, because "he usedn't to make them [the children] right."

834 It is only with the married men and women who are still engaged in producing offspring that any kind of sexual interest, officially at least, is permitted or even deemed to exist. Among others in the rural communities the interest either does not exist at all, in the eyes of small farmers, or it exists only as an evil, but powerful force. As such it must be subjected to constant control. This is the case among the young. Among the old, if it exists at all, it is only as a survival of embers that should far better be long dead. For adults, in adult family life, sex is divested of any awesome, evil character. "God help us," said one woman in this regard, "what is natural can't be wonderful."

581 Thus one can see why it is that nearly everything the young people do seems to their elders to shape them for the goal of marriage and family headship. Much of local custom comes to have that explanation. The goal is taken for granted. It is the ambition of all the young members. Their activity either marks time until they shall be able to take their places as married family heads or it prepares them for that directly. Even the pastimes and jollities of country life in the communities the authors came to know had that keynote.

The pastimes of the young people in which the usual segregation of the sexes is bridged point toward matchmaking and country marriage.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

124 831 855 be herded outside; even then the adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her. One steamer day she aroused stupefaction among a group of men on the strand when she tried—unsuccessfully—to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

831 864 Lack of sexual knowledge and the prevalence of misconceptions about sex combine to brand Inis Beag one of the most sexually naive of the world's societies. Only three mothers admitted giving sexual instructions, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. It is said that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men, and from observing animals covertly. Most islanders who were questioned about how sexual knowledge is imparted to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage, nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety creating confrontations of parents and offspring. I was unable to discover any cases of childlessness in Inis Beag based on sexual ignorance of spouses, as have been reported from other regions of peasant Ireland.

841 886 [123] Menstruation and the menopause arouse profound misgivings among women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological significance. My wife was called on by perplexed women to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one, especially when their mothers are unwilling or unable to explain it satisfactorily. 886 828 It is commonly believed that the menopause can induce insanity; in order to ward it off, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in at least three contemporary cases, have confined themselves to bed until death years later. Yet the harbingers of "madness" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the menopause, which in Inis Beag include migraine headaches, hot flashes, faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Sometimes women who have not yet reached the menopause or have passed it and who fear becoming mentally ill from other causes will experience these symptoms in their anticipatory role playing.

• 833 [793] As to sexual misconceptions, the folk share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more sexually disposed than women. The latter are informed by the curate and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal [832] sin. Women frequently affix the guilt for male libidinal strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes by their spouses (Among the Anang of Nigeria, men fear the excessive sexual demands of their wives and place the blame on clitoridectomy.). Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one woman said, "Men can wait a long time for 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown or not experienced (or considered a deviant response not to be divulged). A middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists during the summer, described the violent bodily reactions of a girl to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life," he admitted not knowing that women also could achieve climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed lovemaking. Inis Beag men

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy. Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as *Time* and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately. Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bathing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puritanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty

to "our man") be chosen for the task. Earlier, according to island opinion, the same priest had caused to be committed to the "madhouse" a local man who publicly challenged certain of his actions. The unfortunate man was released six months later, as per law, since he was not mentally ill.

Sexual misconceptions are myriad in Inis Beag. The islanders share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more libidinous than women. The latter have been taught by some curates and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal sin. A frequently encountered assertion affixes the guilt for male sexual strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes of the Inis Beag male. (In Nigeria, among the people whom my wife and I studied, women are thought to be more sexually disposed than men and are the repositories of sexual knowledge; it is they who initiate coitus and so pose a threat to their spouses. Nigerian men place the blame on clitoridectomy performed just prior to marriage.) Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one mother of nine said, "Men can wait a long time before wanting 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown—or at least doubted, or considered a deviant response. One middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists, described one girl's violent bodily reactions to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life" of what obviously was an orgasm, he admitted not realizing that women also could achieve a climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed kissing and being handled.

Inis Beag men feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, a common belief in primitive and folk societies. They will desist from sex the night before they are to perform a job which will require the expenditure of great energy. Women are not approached sexually during menstruation or for months after childbirth, since they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these times. Returned "Yanks" have been denounced from the pulpit for describing American sexual practices to island youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as *Time* and *Life*, mailed by kin from abroad, have aroused curates to spirited sermon and instruction.

The separation of the sexes, started within the family, is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms, and completely in

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recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,